

COMMUNICATIONS.

Hospital Nurses' Association.

To the Editor of the STATE JOURNAL: The nurses of the Children's Hospital Nurses' Association are endeavoring to complete the sum of \$5,000 required to endow a room for its sick members. Although the nurses are contributing to this cause, the need of such a room is so urgent that we turn to outside friends for gifts of money they may feel inclined to subscribe. Believing that there are many physicians in the State who would be glad to help us in this way, if they knew of the effort we are making, we would ask you to bring the matter to their attention, either by the publication of this letter, or in such a manner as may seem best, through the columns of the STATE JOURNAL.

HELEN P. CRISWELL, President.

Preparations of Digitalis.

To the Editor of the STATE JOURNAL: I am surprised to read in your last number the communication from C. H. S., in which he relates his unsatisfactory experience with digitalis.

From the standpoint of the pharmacist this is worthy of attention, as we have always believed digitalis to be one of the "old reliables." It seems strange that the doctor should have had trouble with so many different makes; but it only goes to emphasize a point I have always contended for, and that is that the pharmacist is the proper person to depend upon for results, and not the manufacturer.

There is a firm of dealers in botanic drugs in England, with a branch house in New York, who grow their own digitalis and other toxic drugs. Their drug is grown right, dried right and shipped right, and any druggist who cares to take the trouble and pay the price can secure their goods.

If he will strip the mid-rib from the leaf, grind the drug carefully, and follow the U. S. P. process of manufacture, he can turn out a tincture, fluid extract or infusion that will do all that we are educated to expect from digitalis.

I know whereof I speak, as some physicians have come to me after using a preparation of digitalis from our laboratory prepared in the foregoing manner, and asked me to save that particular lot for their use, as the results were positive. On explaining to them that it would always be possible to get a preparation of equal potency, they have been content. And what a world of satisfaction it is to a pharmacist to have the physician depending upon him to help fight the battles of the sick.

And not only is this all true of digitalis, but of belladonna, aconite, hyoscyamus, lobelia and many others. There is no guesswork about it. There are some drugs in the pharmacopœia that have stood the test of years and the strain of polypharmacy. The manufacturing pharmacist may spoil them at times in an effort to make them palatable, and a careless druggist may disgust the physician by the sloppy way in which he turns them out; but given intelligent handling from the time of planting to the time of dispensing; given a vehicle in the Rx whereby their delicate alkaloids or glucosides are not antagonized and made inert, the practitioner will find that his text-books are right when they speak of certain drugs as dependable.

K. B. BOWERMAN.

San Francisco, June 12, 1904.

Army Medical Service.

War Department, Office of the Surgeon-General, Washington, June 27, 1904.

To the Editor of the STATE JOURNAL—Sir: I am instructed by the Surgeon-General to send you the enclosed draft of a notice regarding changes in examinations for the Army Medical Service, and to state that he would be pleased to have it appear in

the next issue of your journal, or so much of it as you may find space for. I enclose also a copy of "Circular of Information," containing all published facts regarding the amended regulations, and from which you can use extracts in lieu of the notice, should such a course be desirable. Very respectfully,

M. W. IRELAND, Major, Surgeon, U. S. Army.

EXAMINATION FOR ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE.

The examination of applicants for commission in the Medical Corps of the Army will be materially modified after July 1, 1904, when the amended regulations governing the matter will go into effect. Immediate appointment of applicants after successful physical and professional examination—the latter embracing all subjects of a medical education—will be discontinued; thereafter applicants will be subjected to a preliminary examination and a final or qualifying examination, with a course of instruction at the Army Medical School in Washington intervening.

The preliminary examination will consist of a rigid inquiry into the physical qualifications of applicants, and written examination in the following subjects: Mathematics (arithmetic, algebra and plane geometry); geography; history (especially of the United States); Latin grammar and reading of easy Latin prose; English grammar, orthography, composition; anatomy; physiology; chemistry and physics; materia medica and therapeutics; normal histology. The subjects in general education above mentioned are an essential part of the examination, and cannot, under any circumstances, be waived.

The preliminary examination will be conducted concurrently throughout the United States by boards of medical officers at most convenient points; the questions submitted to all applicants will be identical, thus assuring a thoroughly competitive feature, and all papers will be criticised and graded by an Army Medical Board in Washington. Applicants who attain a general average of 80 per cent and upward in this examination will be employed as contract surgeons, and ordered to the Army Medical School for instruction as candidates for admission to the Medical Corps of the Army; if, however, a greater number of applicants attain the required average than can be accommodated at the school, the requisite number will be selected according to relative standing in the examination.

The course of instruction at the Army Medical School will consist of lectures and practical work in subjects peculiarly appropriate to the duties which a medical officer is called upon to perform. While at this school the students will be held under military discipline, and character, habits and general deportment closely observed.

The final or qualifying examination will be held at the close of the school term, and will comprise the subjects taught in the school, together with the following professional subjects not included in the preliminary examination: Surgery; practice of medicine; diseases of women and children; obstetrics; hygiene; bacteriology and pathology; general aptitude will be marked from observation during the school term. A general average of 80 per cent in this examination will be required as qualifying for appointment, and candidates attaining the highest percentages will be selected for commission to the extent of the existing vacancies in the Medical Department. Candidates who attain the requisite general average who fail to receive commissions will be given certificates of graduation at the school, and will be preferred for appointment as medical officers of volunteers or for employment as contract surgeons; they will also be given opportunity to take the qualifying examination with the next succeeding class.

It is not thought that, for the present at least, the number successfully passing the preliminary examination will be greater than can be accommodated at the Army Medical School, nor that the number qualifying for appointment will exceed the number of vacancies. If, however, the class of candidates qualifying should be larger than reasonably thought, the young physicians who fail to receive commissions will not have wasted their time, as the course of instruction at the school, while in a large measure specialized to army needs, is such as will better fit them for other professional pursuits; and furthermore, they will have received a fair compensation while under instruction.

Admission to the preliminary examination can be had only upon invitation from the Surgeon-General of the Army, issued after formal application to the Secretary of War for permission to appear for examination. No applicant whose age exceeds thirty years will be permitted to take the examination; and the authorities at the War Department desire it distinctly understood that this limit of age will be rigidly adhered to. Hospital training and practical experience are essential requisites, and an applicant will be expected to present evidence of one year's hospital experience or its equivalent (two years) in practice.

The first preliminary examination, under the amended regulations above referred to, will be held in August. Those desiring to enter for examination at any time should communicate with the Surgeon-General of the Army, Washington, D. C., who will be pleased to furnish all possible information in regard thereto.